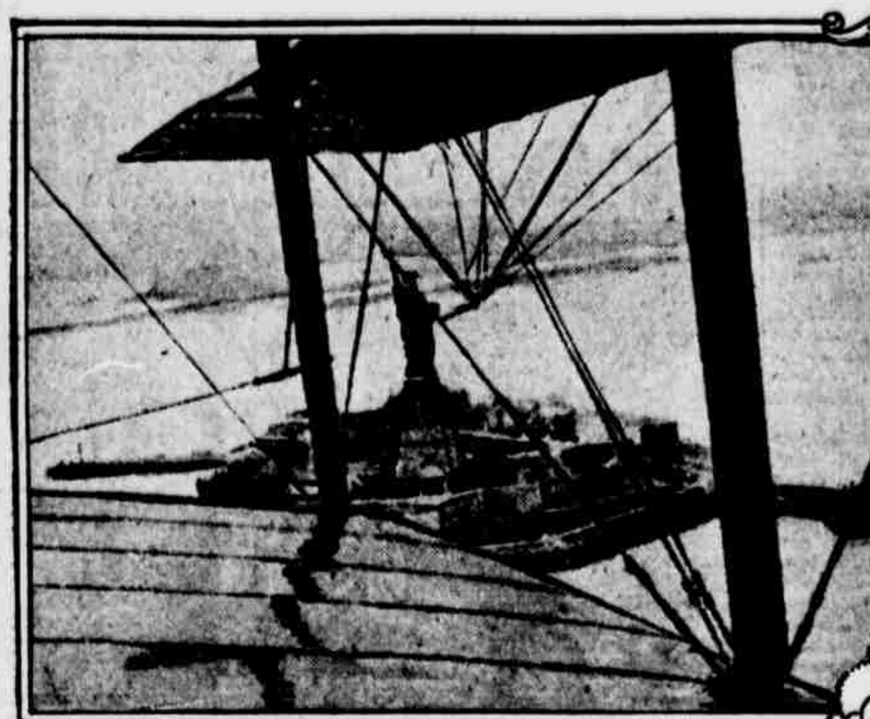
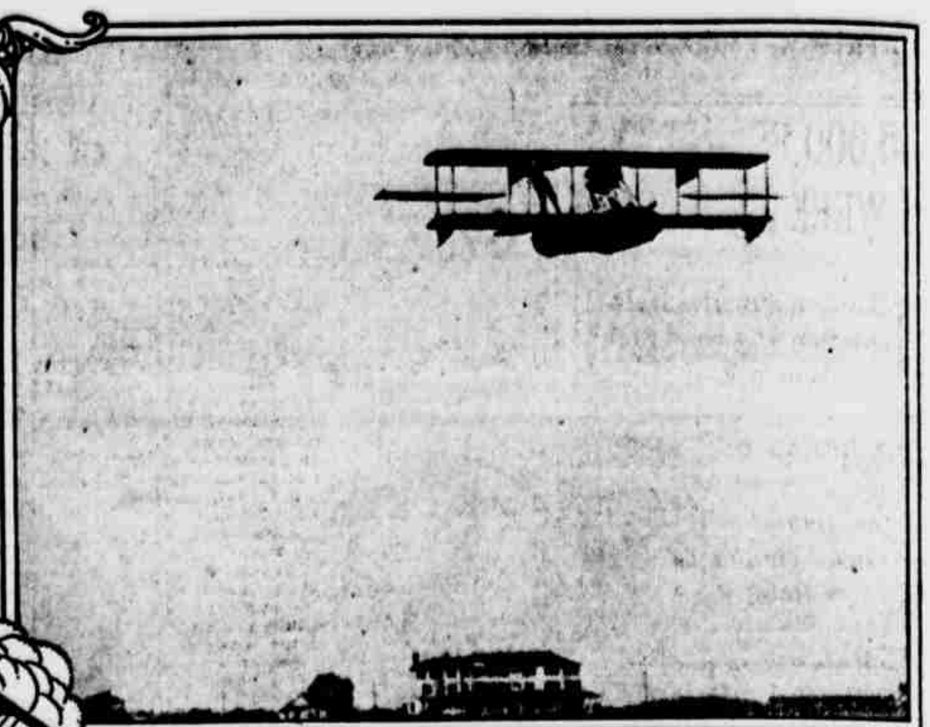
AERIAL COAST PATROL VITAL STEP IN COUNTRY'S DEFENCE



STATUE OF LIBERTY AS SEEN FROM SCOUTING AEROPLANE.

TYPE OF HYDROAEROPLANE NEEDED FOR COAST PATROL.



CURTISS FLYING BOAT, EQUIPPED WITH SPERRY AUTOMATIC PILOT. LAWRENCE SPERRY AT WHEEL WITH ARMS OVER HEAD.

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Minimum of 2,000 Hydroaeroplanes Needed on Each Coast, Says Authority

Rear Admiral Peary is chairman of the National Aerial Coast Patrol Commission and of the committee of aeronautic maps and landing places of the Aero Club of America.

By ROBERT E. PEARY, Rear Admiral, U. S. N.

THE plan to establish an aerial coast patrol consisting of a chain of aviation stations at every fifty or one hundred miles along our coasts is developing fast. Portland, Me., at one end of our Atlantic coast line, has raised the money for a station of the patrol; Port Arthur, Tex., is raising the funds for another, and intermediate communities are ready to do their part.

Congress is interested in the plan and a bill has been introduced in both Senate and House providing for an appropriation of $1,500,000 for establishing units of the aerial coast patrol under the auspices of the navy and in connection with the naval militia and naval reserves. The bill is likely to be passed and the plans to go into effect during the coming session of Congress.

At the time the plan for the aerial coast patrol was proposed a year and a half ago international conditions were much different. No submarine had as yet crossed the Atlantic, and the possibility of a submarine crossing the Atlantic was denied by most people, including some high naval authorities.

Aerial Coast Patrol Unit No. 1, organized by F. Trubee Davison, did valuable work in connection with the mosquito fleet manœuvres, demonstrating conclusively that the aerial coast patrol will become a most practical and valuable organization, enabling civilians to prepare themselves to participate in the serious work of national defence and meeting the new conditions created by submarine and aerial warfare, to meet which this country is sorely unprepared.

The members of Volunteer Aerial Coast Patrol Unit No. 1, which has already earned for itself the distinction of having participated in the first naval manœuvres held under most adverse conditions, locating the ships of the attacking fleet as well as submerged mines, are as follows: F. T. Davison, Robert A. Lovett, John Vorys, John Farwell 3d, Albert Ditman, Wellesley Laud Brown, Artemus L. Gates, Erl Gould, Allan Ames, C. D. Wiman, A. D. Sturtevant and H. P. Davison, Jr.

The members of this unit have gone back to Yale University and are continuing their training while attending the university. Their flights between Port Washington, L. I., and New London, Conn., and back have had a most convincing effect on the people who remember that the members of this unit only started to fly July 7 last.

The unit is now making New London its base, the plan being to manœuvre with submarines and other naval vessels during the winter and spring while the members of the unit are at Yale University. By next spring this unit is to be complete and equipped with the very latest equipment obtainable, ready to meet any emergency.

I want especially to commend the efficiency and the patriotic spirit of the members of this unit. They have set an example which hundreds of other red blooded American young men will undoubtedly follow during the coming season. Whereas little is known about naval aeronautics in this country, their work is the work of the pioneer.

Instead of being dismayed to find that neither the army nor the navy could supply them with text books and information to guide them in their work they set to work to experiment and find out for themselves, but inviting the cooperation and advice of the authorities, so that in the near future they will probably be in a position to make valuable contributions in data regarding reconnoitring at sea, map making and photographing from the air, locating submarines and mines of different color at different depths and under various weather conditions.

I cannot impress too strongly the necessity of putting into effect this plan for the aerial coast patrol as soon as possible. The present international situation is critical and no one can, looking ahead, foresee what may happen.

The seaplanes of the coast patrol will furnish one of the most effective antidotes for the submarine. The patrol is to provide a continuous picket line of seaplanes or flying boats fifty miles or more off shore, round our entire coasts from Eastport, Me., to Brownsville, Tex., and from San Diego, Cal., to Cape Flattery, Wash., each machine travelling back and forth, back and forth over its section or beat, a winged sentinel forming a cordon, a continuous line of whirring shuttles, weaving a blanket of protection around the country.

The idea is to divide our entire coast lines into sections of convenient length, say about one hundred miles. Each of these sections and stations will be equipped with four seaplanes. Each of these machines will carry a driver and an observer and be equipped with light wireless apparatus, powerful glasses and a sensitive microphone.

When in active operation these seaplanes in each section will take their position some fifty or a hundred miles off shore and patrol their respective beats continuously back and forth, in clear weather 2,000 feet or more above the sea, from which altitude ships fifty miles distant may be seen. At night or in the fog the seaplanes would of course sweep much lower, at all times themselves invisible to an enemy.

By means of the wireless information as to the character, number and apparent destination of approaching ships will be transmitted to the shore station and from there to Washington, whence, if the ships are hostile, orders will issue directing the movements of our fleet and the submarine squadrons, for the preparation of the coast defences and for the concentration of troops, if necessary, while reserve planes hurrying out will keep the approaching craft under continuous inspection while themselves invisible.

Such a system is a new departure. The like of it exists nowhere at present and yet it involves no new principle, but is simply the utilization and multiplication of the known capabilities of a single seaplane.

Had there been such a system round the British Isles the Lusitania horror would not have occurred.

Follow me a moment. One of these seaplanes is traversing its beat fifty to 100 miles west of San Francisco and 2,000 feet or more up in the air. A ship or ships appear on the horizon fifty miles further out.

The powerful glasses are brought into play by the observer. His trained eye recognizes the number, character and course of the ships. The wireless crackles the information to the shore station.

The shore station transmits it to the great Government wireless station at San Diego. That station snaps it eastward across the Rockies. In a few minutes Washington knows all about it and if necessary orders are snapped back to San Francisco for whatever action is advisable.

Let us imagine it is war. This advance notice of the approach of the enemy is the first step. In modern warfare hours and even minutes may spell victory.

The enemy is still unaware that his approach is known, for the sentinel seaplane was invisible to him. With the next step a cloud of scout seaplanes sweep out in such numbers as to overwhelm and destroy the enemy's aeroplanes, leaving him blinded. Then follow the squadrons of great battle triplanes, each machine carrying several tons of high explosives to drop upon the hostile fleet. You can imagine the result.

We cannot begin too soon or push too rapidly the materialization of every possible means of rendering our coasts, our coastal cities and our shipping as immune from attack and raid by sea or air as is possible. We should have a minimum of not less than 2,000 hydroaeroplanes available on each coast and we should have an aviator class in numbers like our present chauffeur class.

The coast patrol, however, is but one feature of the country's necessary aerial development. To obtain that development, to give us an air service sufficient for our protection, to secure for us that vital command of the air, there is one basic thing which we should have now:

A department of aeronautics separate from and independent of both the army and the navy, its head a member of the Presidential Cabinet, in full and undivided control of a comprehensive aero coast defence system, which our peculiar geographical position and extended coast line render imperative; of a system of aviation training schools located in each of the principal geographical divisions of the country, and of the civil and commercial avenues of aeronautic usefulness.

With our resources and mechanical genius, under the spur of concentrated and undivided attention, such a department may in the near future be more vital to our national safety and integrity than either the navy or the army.

We must learn and utilize now the lesson Providence has put before us. We have the chance to learn it in peace and sunshine. Our neighbors across the water are learning it in tears and bloodshed.

Suppose such a horror from the air should fall upon one of our cities as has already fallen more than once upon the east coast of England, leaving a trail of dead and dismembered women and children, mutilated men and ruined property. Would the whole country flame with rage? Would there be a snarl of "Why has this happened?" "Who is responsible?" "Why were we not ready to prevent it?"

In England they are concentrating their efforts to put 10,000 aeroplanes in service and keep them in service, which means getting 40,000 aeroplanes a year, since the average life of an aeroplane in war is about three months. I understand that they have over 10,000 aeroplanes now, but not yet the 30,000 additional.

One week of war cost will give us protection. One week of present war cost to Great Britain would give this country such a fleet of aeroplanes as could in an emergency rise from our shores literally like a flock of seagulls to defend and insure our national integrity.

STRANGER CALLS AT OLD MAN GREENLAW'S

By DAVID A. CURTIS.

"THAT story yo' all was tellin' th' other day 'bout a man gwine to sleep into a poker game," said Jim Blaisdell to old man Greenlaw, "sho' was some entertainin', but 'pears to me th' ain't nothin' practic'l into it. I ain't never knowed nobody do nothin' o' that kyind, not 'thouten he was drunk, I ain't, an' if a man's drunk he can't be 'xpected fo' to handle a gun proper, let alone two on 'em to onct, like yo' all says that Carteret feller done.

"I done been studyin' onto it c'nsid'able, bein's it 'peared to be somepin' new into the game, an' anythin' what's new is liable to be wuth tryin', but this yer idee o' p'tendin' to be asleep don't 'pear to be practic'l, like I said. 'Pears like it's some like a lallapalooser. Yo' mought git away with it onct, but 'tain't no kyind of a hand what c'n be played reg'lar."

"Well," replied the old man thoughtfully, "I ain't went so fur's to say what nobody 'd make out s'ccessful if he was to try it repeated, but 'pears like it was practic'l enough when Bub Carteret done it. If a man gits away with the pot into a poker game, th' ain't no use bellyachin' over the way he done it. If it's did, it's did, whether he's asleep, or awake, or drunk, or sober.

"Th' ain't no call fo' yo' all pickin' on Bub Carteret 'long o' the way he done it, nor 'tain't nec'ary fo' to find fault with me fo' tellin' 'bout it. Yo' all 'pears to be overp'tic'lar."

"Oh, shucks," said Blaisdell impatiently. "Th' ain't nobody pickin' onto neither one on yo'. What's eatin' me is to see how the thing c'n be did again. 'Pears like it's mo' 'r less triflin' fo' a man to p'tend to go to sleep when he's got a int'rest in the pot, an' I reckon they wouldn't nobody be liable fo' to be took in by it, not mo' 'n onct he wouldn't, like I said."

"No, nor they wouldn't nobody be took in, not onc't he wouldn't, not by no sich fool trick 's that, not 'thouten he didn't had no sense," said Sam Pearsall, contemptuously. "I've kyind o' got a idee what the hull dawggoned thing is just a plain lie.

"Mebbe the old man drempt it an' he ain't woke up yet. That 'd 'count fo' a heap o' things what he says f'm time to time. I'd a heap druther reckon it was thataway 'n to s'picion him o' makin' up no sich fool story outen his haid."

"I don't see what neither way 'round ain't no better'n t'other," said Jake Winterbottom. "O co'se, it's a fool story. They couldn't nobody b'lieve it 'thouten he was feeble minded, like, but 'pears like it's nigh 'bout 's bad fo' a man to dream it an' not never wake up 's 'tis fo' him to 'magine it when he's awake."

The old man had been choking with indignation to that extent that he was wholly unable to express himself while this colloquy was in progress, but at length he found himself equally unable to continue silent, wherefore he began to sputter. This seemed to relieve him a little, but not sufficiently, and presently he began to swell.

His friends watched him with some amusement for a while, but as the swelling continued it became evident that something would have to be done, otherwise a serious result would follow, and they were not prepared to see him blown to bits.

"I reckon he's liable fo' to bust his b'iler afo' long," said Joe Bassett calmly. "Mebbe somebody 'd best go fo' the doctor."

"Th' ain't no use gwine fo' him, not just now, th' ain't," said Blaisdell. "He's done been drunk fo' the past three or fo' days, an' he's nigh 'bout he'pless now."

"I reckon 't ain't nec'ary fo' to have no doctor nohow," said Winterbottom. "He wouldn't do nothin' but let a little blood if he was to come, an' we uns c'n do that 's well 's him an' save 'xpense." So saying, he drew out his jackknife and began stropping it on the sole of his boot.

Excepting the old man himself, all those present seemed to approve of Mr. Winterbottom's suggestion, and they rose from their seats with the evident intention of carrying it out immediately. The most careless observer would have seen that if it was to be done at all it would have to be done promptly. An explosion of some sort was imminent and a vent of some sort was the only means by which they could hope to save the old man.

Even he seemed to realize this and he strove strenuously to find relief in utterance, but only incoherent sounds came from him, and they gave him no relief whatever. He continued to swell up until it seemed a physical impossibility that he would be able to hold together any longer under the strain.

As the moment of the inevitable catastrophe approached his friends approached also and the old man turned, almost as if by instinct, toward the corner where his bungstarter stood as it always did, ready for immediate use. Reaching out, he seized it in his powerful grasp and the feel of the handle of the trusty weapon in his capable fingers seemed to act as a quick restorative. His speech returned.

"Stand back!" he shouted imperatively, and they stood back.

"If they is any bloodlettin' to be did," he continued, "I ain't the one what 'll be bloodlet. Nor it won't be did with no jackknife. If anybody feels like tryin' it he'll wade round into his own blood fo' c'nsid'able distance afo' he gits whar his knife 'll do him any good."

They could see that he was thoroughly in earnest, and rather than argue the point with him Mr. Winterbottom put his jackknife back in his pocket. It was undoubtedly a graceful surrender of purpose, but it failed to assuage the old man's outraged sensibilities.

Advancing toward them with a firm step, he waved his bungstarter aloft in a determined fashion, alarmingly suggestive of hostile intent. One could not but admire the ease and grace with which he wielded it, or fail to realize the peril to be incurred by getting in the way of it.

Accordingly they fell back further as he came forward, until they were bunched together in the doorway, each evidently desirous of passing out first. In consequence the burly stranger who was in the act of entering the old man's saloon at the very moment experienced some difficulty in making his way inside.

Being a man of evident determination, however, he presently succeeded in doing it, and looking around him with some surprise he observed, "Hoity toity!"

His manner was that of one administering a rebuke, and the old man, perceiving the possibilities of profit in the advent of one who might reasonably be expected to set 'em up, promptly assumed an apologetic air.

"I was jest showin' the boys what c'n be did with a bungstarter if a man knows how to handle it," he said as he put it back in the corner.

"Looked to me mo' like they was some kyind of a mixup," said the stranger doubtfully. "Let b'ars an' catamounts growl an' fight, fo' Gawd done made 'em so, but 'tain't no way fo' a growed up man to b'have."

"Is that so?" retorted Joe Bassett with a sneer. "We uns reckons dif'f'rent in Arkansas City. Them that comes hyar sometimes finds it out."

"Well," said the stranger, still more doubtfully, "mebbe if a man's in Arkansas City it's nec'ary to fight occasional, but I don't never do it my ownself, not 'thouten I'm forced. 'Pears like it's——"

But Bassett interrupted him. He was impatient by nature.

"This yer's one o' the times," he said, "when it 'pears to be nec'ary. They can't nobody come in hyar an' tell we uns what to do, 'thouten——"

Here he interrupted himself by delivering a terrific blow toward the point of the stranger's jaw.

The point of the stranger's jaw, however, was not there when the blow arrived and the impetus which Mr. Bassett had given to his entire person when he delivered it carried him past the spot on which the stranger had been standing.

Before he could turn about the stranger had placed himself astraddle of the small of Mr. Bassett's back with his legs wrapped firmly around Mr. Bassett's stomach. At the same instant, it seemed, he had encircled the greater part of Mr. Bassett's neck with two bunches of muscular fingers which he proceeded to constrict vehemently. By thus doing he rendered Mr. Bassett incapable of speech for the moment and so enabled himself to resume the conversation without further interruption.

"I was a sayin' what I don't never fight my own self, not 'thouten I's fo'ced," he remarked leisurely, "nor I don't never 'low nobody to fight when I's round, if they 's any way to p'vent it. 'Pears like they ain't gwine to be no fight, right now th' ain't."

As he finished speaking Bassett fell heavily to the floor, leaving the speaker standing at ease in front of the bar.

"Let's liquor," he said calmly, and at the magic words the others laid aside their intention of interfering with him and ranged themselves beside him, while the old man juggled out some glasses and opened a fresh bottle of whiskey. In counting out the glasses he was careful not to omit one that should serve for the use of Mr. Bassett in case he should join the party, and while they were passing the bottle along Mr. Bassett did so.

He looked a little dazed, but they understood readily enough that he had fallen as a matter of precaution before he was entirely helpless. Doughty as he was, he was not foolhardy, and he felt, as the others did, that he had shown only common prudence in succumbing as he had, when there was no possible way for him to do anything else.

He took his drink with the others and then said, somewhat hesitatingly: "I'm kyind o' sorry, stranger, what yo' all is got sich a prijudice ag'in fightin'. 'Pears like me an' yo' c'd find a heap o' pleasure into a roughhouse if we was to git together ag'in."

"Ain't yo' all had enough?" asked the stranger as if surprised. "I kyind o' reckoned what they wouldn't be no mo' int'rest tooken into the p'ceedin's, but if they is, yo' all c'n easy r'sume 'em. I done told yo' what I c'd be fo'ced."

His manner was that of one who was not himself greatly interested, but who, on the other hand, was willing to oblige, and they eyed him with interest and respect.

His clothes did not fit, but loosely as they hung they could not altogether hide the indications that pointed to a probability that something unusual would result should Bassett persist.

And Bassett did persist. The stranger was entirely mistaken in supposing he had had enough. He advanced quickly, but on the instant the old man spoke chidingly.

"This yer ain't no place fo' outdo' spo'ts," he said. "If they's gwine to be ainy v'lent diddin's they'll have to be postponed to some other place. Yo' uns c'n wrastle all over the levee fo' all I care, but I ain't gwine to have my furniture broke.

"An' b'sides that, they ain't nobody done been p'lite enough fo' to set 'em up fo' this gent, a'ter he's done did his-self's proud 's he done. If they ain't nobody else got manners enough fo' to show no 'preciation, I reckon I'll have to do it my own self."

No one else had, so after looking at them a moment as if vainly hoping that some one would speak, he said: "This yer's on the house," and put out fresh glasses. Before they could finish their drinks he was talking again.

"The gent is dead right," he said. "Th' ain't no sense in fightin' 'thouten they's some 'casion fo' it, an' if anybody's hell bent onto it, like they is some 'pears to be"—here he looked at Bassett reprovingly—"the best way is fo' to p'vide some 'xcuse.

"Now when it comes to p'vidin' somepin to pick a quar'l 'bout, they ain't nothin' ek'l to draw poker. They is all the f'cilities fo' a settin' in the back room if anybody's d'sposed fo' to play, an' they c'n be 's much fightin' did a'ter the game 's anybody wants, on'y it 'll be did legitimate. 'Pears like they ain't nothin' p'tic'lar to fight about, not now they ain't."

"That's reas'nable," said the stranger. "I c'n be fo'ced, like I said, 'most any time, but I'd a heap druther know what I'm fightin' about, an' they's al'ays somepin' liable fo' to happen into a poker game what'll just nachully p'voke a man, an' kyind o' make it mo' reas'nable like fo' to manhandle somebody."

Mr. Bassett had observed, as they all had, the size of the wad from which the stranger took money to pay for the drinks he had called for, and he was willing to admit that it would be reasonable to play a while, provided it was recognized that the game should be regarded as a preliminary, and with this understanding they played.

No poker player needs to be told that strong personal characteristics, when they exist, are likely to show themselves when a man plays poker, and the stranger undoubtedly had some.

He maintained an appearance of great indifference till the occasion called for action, and then showed himself to be tremendously in earnest, wherefore it happened that after one or two uninteresting rounds there suddenly appeared on the table a pot of unusual size. It was true that Mr. Jim Blaisdell was the dealer, but the stranger as a stranger could not be expected to attach any special importance to that fact. At all events he seemed not to, and he forced the play with enthusiasm.

This was not unreasonable in view of the fact that he held four tens before the draw, but Mr. Pearsall had three queens and some confidence, and Mr. Winterbottom appeared to have considerable curiosity, so they tarried with him for some time till, as was said, there was much money up. Then came the draw.

The stranger stood pat. Pearsall took one card and Winterbottom took two without having any particular use for them. It was the stranger's bet and he bet. He showed no great concern when Pearsall raised him, but when Winterbottom made it a hundred more he seemed to see light.

After some thought he said, "I done told yo' uns what I c'd be fo'ced, an' right hyar is whar I's just nachully fo'ced to lay down. Fo' tens is a tol'able good hand ag'in one, but tain't wuth a cuss ag'in two into a seesaw."

Here Mr. Bassett seemed to feel that a situation had arisen which made it unnecessary to look further for something to fight about, and he and the stranger went out on the levee, where doings ensued which cannot be described here for lack of space.